

An Essay  
on the  
Strumous Diathesis.

Respectfully Submitted  
to the  
Homoeopathic Medical College  
of Pennsylvania.

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For the  
Doctorate in Medicine

by  
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of Maryland.

# Strumous Diathesis,

The subject which the writer has chosen for his Thesis, he fears has long since been exhausted of all the interest which the attractive charm of novelty would throw around it.

But in compliance with the time honored custom of Medical schools, the writer of this has brought together in as good order as his time and attainments would admit, his own thoughts as well as the information for which he is indebted to authors, on the subject that he has chosen. If in the writing of this brief Essay, a single idea has been suggested to the author which will add a

partake to the aggregate of human happiness,  
or tend in the slightest degree to mitigate  
human suffering, he will feel himself  
amply repaid for the time he has bestowed  
on it composition.

From a mere Lyceum in Medicine nothing  
is expected, (the author is aware) but a  
statement of his views substantiated  
by such authorities, as may be immediately  
acceptable to him on the subject.

Had the writer the powers of the Poet,  
or Divine, volumes might be written  
upon the topic he has chosen, and  
the subject would remain unexhausted,  
but as a mere student of Medicine he  
is aware that it must be viewed in  
another and more practical light.

And without any further preface he will-

at once proceed to the consideration of  
his subject.

The terms Scrofula and Struma, being  
used as convertible terms, the writer will  
so use them as he has occasion during  
the course of his Essay.

The term Scrofula, is derived from the  
Latin word, "Scrofa", and was originally used  
by Vegetius to denote a peculiar disease  
in cattle which strongly resembles the  
Scrofulous Glandular swellings, which occur  
in the human subject; The Latin authors  
adopt it in their Nosological tables, using  
it to indicate the swellings which are known  
at the present day to be scrofulous.

Cullen defines Scrofula to be "Tumors  
of the glands chiefly in the neck, upper  
lip, and soft part of the nose turned,

face florid, skin soft, abdomen large;

It is now however generally thought that Scrophula consists in a peculiar morbid deposit called "Tubercle", and that Scrophulous swellings of the neck, Phthisis, Tuber Mesenterica, Enlargement of the joints, Eruptions, &c, owe their appearance to this peculiar deposit of Tuberculous matter.

The physical signs of this diathesis are numerous, and some of them are spoken of by authors as being almost pathognomonic.

They are stated to be an Extreme Whiteness, fairness, and softness of the skin, light hair, blue eyes, in a soft and rounded form of the body, and generally a mild and pleasant expression of the face, the cheeks of a bright rosy hue, the teeth of a pearly whiteness, and subject to -

Easy and rapid decay; the skin is very easily wounded and difficult to heal, the limbs are disproportioned to the size of the trunk, and are generally light and well formed, sometimes those who are of this diathesis are above and often below the medium stature, <sup>we</sup> as a general rule they are always on one of these extremes. The powers of the body are feeble, and there is but little endurance of fatigue. The circulation is generally weak and but feebly carried on in the extremities. We have generally torpor of the bowels and indigestion connected with this diathesis. There is a great disinclination for exertion, or any kind of active labor among its professors, and this feeling early in life often influences them in choosing some sedentary

and light occupation, which tends to develop the latent disease which exists within them, and accelerates the formation of Tubercle, instead of choosing an active and exposed life as might retard or permanently prevent its appearance.

But though these individuals are thus deficient in physical power, they appear to be peculiarly gifted in mind, they are generally of keen perception, a great deal of fancy and imagination, warm feelings, and of a sanguine turn in their undertakings; In Early life they are generally distinguished for the brilliancy of their minds, but this appears to be at the expense of their future greatness, they are generally nervous and impulsive in manner, but want for the -

application, firmness, and steadiness  
of purpose, that are so essential to  
success in life. We have another species  
of constitution belonging to this diathesis,  
It belongs to those who are of a dark and  
billious complexion, We have in these,  
round limbs, and generally distended abdomens,  
muscular weakness, loose skin, with great  
apathy or indifference, absence of mind,  
often irritability of temper, and great  
obstinacy of manner, In fact we have here  
several or most of the attributes of what  
has been styled the Leucophlegmatic  
temperament; The late Dr Samuel Johnson  
that intellectual Goliath of England, of whom  
it may be truly said, "He never said a  
foolish thing and never <sup>did</sup> do a wise one,"  
is the best illustration of this class that -

at present occur to the writer.

Scrophula sometimes appears in persons, who possess none of the signs of this diathesis that I have named, but these are exceptions, The general rule is that it should occur in such persons as those I have above described; Conjunctivitis, cervical swellings, and various tumors, and enlargements of the glands, occur among those who do not apparently possess this diathesis, but whenever any disease of this kind shows itself in any one, notwithstanding his apparent health, we may safely infer from it, that he is of a sthumous habit, and if not cut off, by accident or some acute disease, that he will one day die of Tubercular Phthisis, our treatment in these cases -

should be prophylactic, and such restrictions should be used as to prevent the development of Tubercles, or such other diseases as are may be led to fear from the leading symptoms in the case. Scrophulous diseases <sup>attack</sup> pierce all the tissues of the body.

It is observed in the subcutaneous tissue, and is frequently found eating its way through the integuments, and leaving ghastly wounds exposed on the surface. This is a form difficult to heal or treat, and on its recovery, it leaves scars or cicatrices of a very ugly character. The mucous membranes are often the seat of its ravages, The mucous Membrane of the nose is destroyed and the bones become spongy and carious, The Mucous Membrane of the Eyes, are also altered, and here we have Conjunctivitis, and the several -

forms of opthalmia, also the mucous lining  
of the bowels, and here we have <sup>or</sup> profovation,  
The serous Membranes also suffer from  
this disease, the Pleura, the Peritoneum,  
and arachnoid are each at times the place  
of deposits of Tuberculous matter;

It sometimes invades the serous Membranes  
of the brain, and causes all the symptoms  
of acute Hydrocephalus; The synovial  
Membranes, and lastly the osseous system  
<sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ liable to this disease; When it attacks  
the bowels we have a slight increase of  
vascularity in the system, which is followed  
by absorption of the earthy matter of the  
bones, in consequence of which it becomes  
so much softened that we can cut it with  
a knife, after a time this state of softening  
is followed by exfoliations of the Bone which-

comes away in large flakes.

The Spinal Column is more apt to suffer from this disease, than any other part of the osseous system, When we have softening and caries of these bones, from the settling of the spine angular curvatures are produced.

The Periosteum when attacked by it falls off, and without the bone suffering, but it (the Bone) becomes covered with large masses of adipose tissue, which lay around and enclose it.

The Mesenteric, Mesocæcal, Mesocolic, and Lumbar Glands, the Parotis, Maxillary, and the Glands in the Groins, are all liable to, and are attacked by this disease.

The causes that give rise to scrofula are numerous, and scarcely well defined.

Longstaff, Thomson, Ogler, Louis, and Andral

have all detected tubercles in the lungs  
of the father, though there can be little  
doubt that both the predisposition, and  
the disease itself can be derived from  
the parent: there is reason to believe  
that it is not exclusively so derived,  
but that certain causes to which we are  
subjected through life can produce the same  
effect; It is not communicated by direct  
contact or intercourse, although there  
are many respectable authorities who  
believe to the contrary, The writer has  
slept for a number of months in the  
same bed with a phthirical friend, and  
without to the best of his knowledge having  
contracted the least taint of the disease;  
Beaudelogue quotes the fact that in the  
Hospital des Enfants, 150 beds are occupied -

by children, some of whom are scrupulous,  
yet the disease was never known to be  
communicated from one to another;

Also at the Hospital of St Louis observation  
confirms the same fact.

Bad air, bad diet, and bad hygiene, generally  
appears to produce it, yet we find it  
unfortunately too common among those who  
are subject to none of these influences;

We find that this Diarrhea prevails to as great  
an extent, among the children of the wealthy  
as among the poor; In fact we often find

those are well fed, and provided for, extremely  
liable to this disease, while the hardy sons of  
poverty, enjoy a comparative immunity from  
its ravages.

As regards location we find  
that it is as prevalent in one situation as  
in another; and here again we find, that if

there is any difference it appears as though those parts of the country, which should be considered most healthy are most liable to it; In mountainous districts where from the scarcity of population, there necessarily follow a good deal of intermarrying, this diathesis prevails to a great extent.

Most persons of this diathesis if it develops itself in early life die young.

Those who reach the age of puberty, are much more enfeebled in health, and if they marry and have families, they always beget scrupulous children, or children in whom this disease in a few years develops itself; They have occasional remissions but still they never possess the fine constitution that belong to those who were originally exempt from its influence.

Although such persons appear to be temporarily

cured they possess the power of procreating vigorous children. Persons appear to be relieved from tubercles, and yet die from them, a longer or shorter time after their apparent cure.

Among the most prominent causes of this Diathesis, are ranked the syphilitic virus in the parents, Precocious Marriages both among the rich and poor; Onanism has been named as a cause, but Lugol thinks that it is rather an effect of this Diathesis.

Sometimes the cause are with the Father, and sometimes with the mother, and at others the disease owes its origin to both.

The fact its being hereditary appears to be undisputed, and such being admitted our Legislators should frame and pass such laws, as would put a stop to the many ill-assorted

marriages that are daily taking place around us by which this evil is perpetuated.

It belongs to science to prepare the way for legislation on this subject. Apart from the fear of perpetrating this diathesis there can be no doubt but that marriage is almost always fatal to those persons who are predisposed to tuberculous diseases.

In Italy and the south of Europe it is still believed that phthisis is contagious, but experiments made by Lugol, both by inoculation, and various other ways, prove that it cannot be considered contagious, and that it is always either owing to transmission, or is a sporadic disease. Improper diet, bad water, sleeping in badly ventilated apartments, have each been named among the causes of this diathesis, but the writer cannot say to-

much stress upon them in as much as it is  
evident to all that the disease is as ripe among  
those who possess all the luxuries of life as  
among any other class, and we find that in  
in this disease that poverty is rather a  
prophylactic than otherwise, as we seldom  
find it prevail among sailors, farmers,  
Butchers, or Druggists in fact in any of those  
classes, where business requires an active out  
door life. There is no doubt in the writers mind  
that an inactive and sedentary occupation tends  
to the rapid development of this class of disease,  
when the predisposition to ~~them~~<sup>it</sup> exists; and  
that a more active and exposed life will  
tend to defeat the same end. As to the  
influence of climate upon ~~them~~<sup>it</sup> we cannot  
say much; In all parts of the world, from  
the snow clad mountains of Siberia, to the -

sunny plains of Italy, this diathesis appears to prevail; the extreme frigid and torrid zones appear to be alike subject to its influence. Our own country suffers more from its ravages than from the effects of any other class of diseases.

It is the writers opinion that two thirds of our national mortality, leaving out of the calculation those deaths which are the result of infancy, old age, or accident, are caused by diseases belonging to this diathesis. Nor does tubercular diseases appear to be confined to the human species, almost all animals when subject to its predisposing influences appear to be subjects of its ravages; this has been particularly observed in those denizens of the forest, who transplanted from -

their native wilds, are condemned to perpetual imprisonment in our menageries; Among these nearly every death that has occurred has been attributable to tuberculous deposit. It must be apparent

then that this diathesis prevails to a great extent, and is not confined to any particular locality, or race, but that from

"Greenland's ice bound coast to Africa's torrid desert, from the regions of almost perpetual night, to where the Dog star always rages," all nations, and people are subject to its influence.

Having thus briefly spoken of its physical, and Diagnostic signs, of its causes, and of its locality, we must now devote a short space to its

Treatment,

At the commencement of the disease when children are slow in learning to walk, the principal remedies, are,

Bell, Calc. carb, Silic and Sulph.

For the second stage when the glands become affected, require principally, Bary-lark, Bell, Calc-carb, Cistus-can, Leon, Dule, Hesp, Lye, Mere, Phos, Rhus-tox, Silic and sulph.

When cutaneous affections such as Eruptions, Meers, and Eruptions of different kind attach the body, the principal remedies, are Aur, Bary-lark, Calc-lark, Cistus-leon, Clem, Leon, Dule, Hesp, Lye, Mere, Mur-ac, Rhus-tox, Silic and sulph, and also Lanth, Hal-hy, Mez, Nitr-ac, Ol-jee, Petr, Ran-bulk,

Affections of the osseous system, —

particularly require, Aur, Calc-carb,  
Cistus-can, Iod, Lye, Mere, Phos, Phos-ac,  
Puls, Silic and Sulph.

Abdominal obstructions or Mesenteric  
Atrophy, require primarily Sulph,  
followed by Calc-carb, or the Ars, Asa,  
Bary-carb, Bary-mur, Bell, Canst, Chin,  
Iod, Iod, Lye, Mere, Nux-om, Puls  
and Rhin-tox.

If accompanying Scald-head, there is a  
Scrophulous affection, such as Enlargement  
of the glands of the neck &c the principal  
remedies, are, Ars, Bary-carb, Calc-carb,  
and Staph, or the Bary, or Iod.

For Scrophulous Buboer, a preference  
may be given to Hep, Sil, Sulph, or the  
Ars, Calc-carb, Clem, Iod, Mere,  
Nitr-ac, &c.

When caries of the Bone arises from  
Scrophulo-syphilitic origin, Arum,  
is the principal remedy.

Bronchial Catarrh in Scrophulous  
Children, Bell, and Calc. carb., are very  
useful.

Scrophulous Ophthalmia, requires especially  
Ars, Bell, Calc. carb., Dulc, Ilep, Ign,  
Mere, Nux. vom, Puls, Rhms. tox, and  
Sulph, or Elc, Lant, Chin, Ferr, Graph,  
Petr, Sep, or Elc again, Aur, Bor. carb,  
Cann, Cham, Lou, Dig, Euphras, Ios,  
Lyc, Mang, and Natr. mur.

Against Scrophulous Otorrhoea (with  
ulceration of the Concha) Especially  
Ilep, Lyc, Mere, Puls, and Sulphur.

Diarrhoea in scrophulous subjects requires  
particularly, Calc. carb., Dulc, Lyc, Sep,

Sil, Sulph, or the Ars, Bary. carb, Chin,  
For Hydræ in scrofulous persons, Sil,  
has been particularly recommended.

Amblyopia in scrofulous subjects,  
Bell, Cole. carb, Chin, Cin, Dale, Mere,  
and Sulph, are particularly adopted, and also  
Ars, Euphra, Hep, Nux. vom, or Puls.

Scrofulous swelling of the Lips, require  
principally Ars, Bell, Bry, Hep, Sack,  
Mere, Sil, Staph, and Sulph.

If there be at the same time drawing back  
of the Lips, Bell, and Mere, are most  
suitable.

If there be scabs, or Ulceration of the Lips,  
Bell, Hep, Mere, Sep, Silic, Staph, and  
sulph, or perhaps again Cic, Geoph, Nitric,  
Scrofulous swelling of the Nose  
require especially Asa, Ars, Cole. carb,

Hep., Mer., Puls., and Sulph., or again  
Bay, Lach., and Phos.

Scrophulous Inflammation of the Eyes,  
Eyelids, and Ears, Bony. lock, is specific.

The *Veronica beccabunga*, and also  
the *Veronica scutellata*, used under the  
common name of Brook-lime, have been  
used Externally and Internally with success  
in Old Scrophulous Ulcers, accompanied with  
symptoms of Phtisis; but they have not  
been proved satisfactorily yet, therefore they  
have not been introduced into the Materia-  
Medica.

The writer desires to call  
the attention of the profession more particularly  
to the inviolable curative power of the  
*Gistus canadensis*, from a remarkable cure  
performed by him, on a lad 14 years old,  
who has been awfully afflicted for upwards

of two years, with large scrofulous Ulcers upon the ankle and thigh; together with inflammation of the submaxillary, and Inguinal glands, with a constant discharge of offensive pus from the Ears; Having seen the good effect of this remedy in previous cases, I determined to try the full effect of it, without any alteration; I accordingly administered one drop of the Tincture of Castoreum, Every night before going to bed, had the Ulcers washed daily with pure Castile soap, and burnt tow applied to the Ulcers, in order to absorb all pus that might accumulate, and to my agreeable surprise, in thirty days from the time I commenced to treat my patient, the Ulcers were all healed, and all inflammation disappeared save a small tumor in the Inguinal region, which -

appears to be diminishing, the discharge from the can ceased the first week of treatment.

The treatment of this disease must be modified of course to suit the different cases, Hygienic rules should be observed by the inheritor of this diathesis, during infancy.

Too early education should be prevented, and every appearance of precocity in intellect should be fanned down, reading in solitude, display of feeling, and pensiveness of disposition, should be avoided; While cheerful gait, exercise in sun-light, and the open air, company, and whatever tends to preserve a healthy state of the mind, and body should be attended to. The wearing of comfortable clothing, and avoiding exposure to weather, as well as all exciting moral emotions, together with such a choice of pursuit in life, as will embrace -

a portion of out door exercise in labour.

By such a course the direct access of any of the diseases of this clap may be averted perhaps permanently, while by their neglect, the seeds of disease, and death, may be more speedily developed. No clap of diseases deserves the physicians most serious consideration more than this, and in none can his advice be of more value; by a proper exercise of his skill and influence he can prevent a great deal of sickness and suffering, and it is his imperative duty to do so; by preventing if possible some of the ill-assorted marriages, that are daily taking place, he can prevent the detailing of these diseases, on a progeny who from the very nature of things must be short-lived, and feeble.

His duty to society as well as to his profession should induce him to do so, and although we do not expect, that his voice in these matters,

will have the weight, to which it should be  
Entitled, still as a consciencious man in the  
discharge of his duty he can do no less;  
It is our duty as well as our privilege to do  
on such occasions, all that our art will suggest,  
to alleviate the ills which suffering flesh is  
heir to, and adopting a firm but moderate  
course, between the rash boldness of Empiricism  
on the one hand, and ill-timed scepticism  
and timidity on the other.

Armed with the shield and buckler of  
humanity and science, stand boldly in the  
breach, and by a skilful and judicious course  
prevent his patients hopes or fears yielding a  
golden harvest to those rumpies the vendors  
of quack nostrums; There is no obligation  
in the duty of a physician either expressed or  
implied the weight of which the writer feels more  
deeply, and responds to more cordially than this.

our duty to frown down and expose secret nostrums.

And in concluding, the writer must Express his feelings of gratitude and respect for his Preceptor, in this institution, to whose tuition he feels indebted for the largest portion of his limited medical knowledge. This may not perhaps be the most fitting occasion to make such acknowledgments, yet the writer cannot let perhaps the only opportunity that he will have of Expressing himself escape unimproved.

That the future of his Alma Mater, may be as useful, as brilliant, and as prosperous as it has heretofore been is his most sincere wish, and that his own career in life, shall not render him unworthy to be ranked among her sons, shall be his earnest Endeavour.

George W. Bigler.